

Hazel Choe

DATA 400: Senior Capstone

Professor Bilen

18 September 2025

Project Proposal

This project will examine how the popularity of different movie genres is influenced by economic shocks, including recessions, unemployment increases, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The research objectives are: Does certain movie genres thrive during economic downturns, and what does this reveal about consumer demand for entertainment under stress? Through the application of macroeconomic theory to cultural consumption, the research will investigate whether some genres do better in stable or expanding economies. In contrast, others tend to gain market share during economic downturns.

Data will be gathered from openly accessible sources. The Numbers and Box Office Mojo will be used to determine box office revenue and market share by genre from the 2000s, with IMDb being used to enhance the genre classifications. Macroeconomic data from the World Bank and the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) will be used to calculate GDP growth, unemployment, and recession periods.

Economic factors and box office results at the genre level will be combined in the analysis. Regression models will be used to determine if particular genres typically increase or decrease in popularity during crises, and then descriptive time-series graphs will show changes in genre popularity during recessions. This method will highlight the relationship between consumer demand and cultural products under macroeconomic stress.

The implications extend to multiple stakeholders. Theaters can maximize programming during downturns, and studio might modify their production strategy based on genre resiliency. Cultural analysts could gain more insights into how communities turn to specific forms of entertainment during difficult times, and investors could benefit from finding reliable sectors of the film industry.